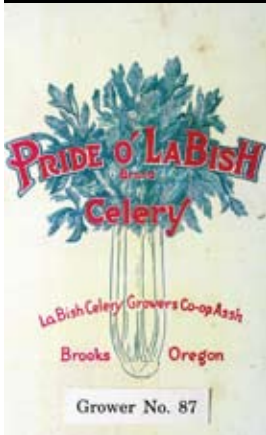




*Courtesy of the Oregon State Library*

Aug. 15 to Nov. 4, 2009  
at The World Beat Gallery



*Courtesy of the Sons of Lake Labish*



Japanese Voices from  
the Northwest



# Japanese Voices from the Northwest

*On December 7th, 1941, the nation of Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. This action brought about immediate and unimaginable changes to the lives of the Japanese Americans living on the West Coast. In a few weeks 120,000 people were uprooted and forcibly relocated to ten internment camps in the most desolate areas of the country. They were declared enemy aliens, though most were U.S. citizens. Their rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness were waived by President Franklin Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066. He declared a wartime emergency, and almost overnight the Japanese communities on the West Coast of America simply disappeared, including a small farming community in Northeast Salem. This exhibit tells some of their story starting with how they came to be here in the first place and ending with how their presence has affected modern Salem.*

*-Salem Multicultural Institute Staff  
and Community Partners*

**ISSEI** (ee-say): First generation immigrant(s) from Japan

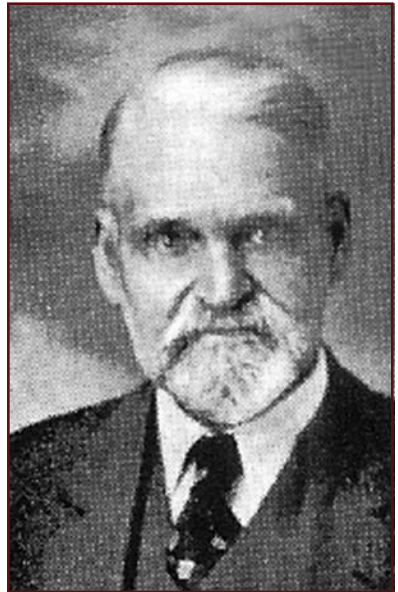
**NISEI** (nee-say): Second generation U.S.-born Japanese

**SANSEI**(son-say): Third generation U.S.-born Japanese

## Land of Opportunity

### Beginnings of Salem's Japanese Community

Around 1917, Salem landowner and state legislator, Madison L. Jones (known as M.L. to locals) needed a group of workers with a strong work ethic and excellent farming skills to build a new farming community to cultivate the rich, dark soil of Lake Labish. M.L. had spent years draining the lake, which 200,000 years ago was a channel of the Willamette River. Through the centuries, it became a swamp due to underground springs, and M.L. suspected that the black, beaver-dam soil in the lake bed would produce incredible crops. He and his son, Ronald E. Jones Sr., needed trustworthy tenant farmers to work his land. Around 1920, M.L. Jones met a Japanese immigrant farmer, Roy Kinzaburo Fukuda, who was living in Brooks. Jones knew he had found the person to make the most of Labish's fertile land.



*Madison Lafayette Jones*

Born in Okayama, Japan, in 1875, Roy K. Fukuda immigrated to Oregon in the late 1800s in search of opportunity. He worked on railroads and farmed for several years in other parts of the state. In the early 1900s, he moved to the Brooks area. Today, Fukuda is the man who is largely credited with starting the Japanese community in the Salem, but at that time he was just trying to make a living in his new home.

Courtesy of the Oregon State Library



Roy Fukuda and family  
c. 1917

Fukuda and Jones shared a vision of what Lake Labish could be, and Fukuda succeeded in convincing many of his former railroad and farm worker friends, as well as some people from Japan, to join him. M.L. arranged to lease approximately 100 acres of his land to Fukuda, who in turn leased small acreages to various Japanese tenant farmers. By the early 1930s, the small community had grown to about 250 people (about 36 families) who farmed 5 to 10 acres each.

These were the Depression years. The Japanese community, like so many others around the country, struggled to make a living. But the Japanese had a long tradition of coaxing great production from limited natural resources through hard, manual labor. Quality land is scarce in mountainous Japan. As a result, greenhouses have been used there for centuries. Greenhouses allowed farmers to start plants and grow vegetables even in the winter months. In Lake Labish, the greenhouses were used to produce two crops a year of celery and lettuce, two of the highest-priced crops in the country.

Celery and other vegetables grown by the Japanese were highly labor-intensive crops. Clyde Boehm, one of the other early farmers in Labish, remembered the Japanese farmers *“raised the most beautiful celery and lettuce and had their own greenhouses to start the plants. So much hand labor! And in my mind I can still smell the celery.”*

The Lake Labish farmers also planted directly in the fields. Crops like onions, spinach, mint, and other “money” crops were hardy enough to start from seed. However, it was the celery crop that made Lake Labish famous. By 1913, Fukuda had developed the “Golden Plume,” a white variety of celery that was said to be highly favored because of its delicate taste. People as far as the East Coast clam





# Japanese Voices from the Northwest

ored for Fukuda's Golden Plume, which only grew in Lake Labish.

In 1925, at the behest of Jones, and because of Golden Plume's popularity Senator Charles L. McNary paid a visit to the Fukuda farm as a way to promote the community and its products. To show his appreciation, Fukuda sent a sample of the celery to Senator McNary and to President Coolidge. Later, Fukuda received a letter from the White House thanking him. McNary's senatorial colleagues also praised the celery as "the most delicious they had ever eaten." By the 1930s celery production by the growers association increased to 700 carloads a year. The high demand for his product led Fukuda to form a co-operative, the Labish Celery Growers Union. Later a second co-op was created as the market expanded.

*"In the years prior to the war Ronald Jones would send carloads and carloads of celery back East. Sometimes it was pre sold before it even arrived, and sometimes it was on consignment – so we had our lean years too, but mostly it sold very well," Henry Yoshikai, who grew up in Lake Labish said.*

At the beginning of the year they would begin the long process of planting and tending the celery seedlings in one of the dozens of Labish greenhouses.

*"They started them from seed around the first of February, and would grow them to about two inches tall. Then we'd transplant them into boxes. Then around April we'd put them in the ground," Yoshikai said.*

*"The greenhouses were made entirely of glass, 20-30 feet by 50 feet – glass on top and glass on the sides. We had a pot-belly stove in there to heat them that had to be tended around the clock. At 11 o'clock at night my mother would go out and stoke it up. Then around 4 a.m. she'd go check it again. Some of the greenhouses were huge—the Fukudas had a huge house and it would be pretty warm in there. The fire was going all the time."*



Courtesy of the Oregon State Library

In addition to his farm, Fukuda soon opened a general store and gas station to serve the

Celery starts in a Lake Labish green house

burgeoning community. In addition to that store, the small enclave boasted two community centers: Fukuda Hall for Japanese entertainment, movies, and Buddhist services, and Ogura Hall for other cultural gatherings and Saturday Japanese language school. There was a Christian church that held Japanese and English services, a kindergarten, and in town a couple of laundries and restaurants. As it grew, the Lake Labish community became increasingly integrated into Salem as a whole.

### Part of the Salem Community

The children of Salem's Japanese farmers blended seamlessly with the larger community. During the school year they attended Hayesville, Perkins, and Washington elementary schools, Parrish Middle School, and the old Salem High School. They may have looked differently from their Caucasian classmates, but they didn't feel or act much different—with the exception of attending Japanese school on Saturdays to learn their parents' language. Also, the Japanese community held picnics and observed traditional Japanese cultural events, such as New Year's (the most important) and the late summer Obon Festival, a Buddhist tradition which welcomes the spirits of departed relatives home for a visit (this is somewhat similar to the Spanish *Dia de los Muertos* tradition).

Otto Skopil, senior judge for the United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, grew up in Salem and remembered his childhood friendship with Taul Watanabe the son of one of the Japanese laundry owners:

*“Well, Taul and I were really more like brothers. We first became acquainted when he was going to Washington Grade School in Salem and I was going to Englewood. He was playing on their softball team and I was playing on Englewood's. Then when we went to Parrish Junior High School, and became very, very close friends almost immediately. During that time, with the*



*Courtesy of the Oregon State Library*



*Fukuda's gas station is now Northwest RV Sales*





# Japanese Voices from the Northwest



Otto Skopil, *Sophomore Class*  
Picture, 1935 year book

*exception of summer, I'd see Taul daily. We would do a lot of studying in my home or his...I had a great appreciation for the Japanese people. I was somewhat in awe of them, too, because they were so disciplined as far as school work went."*  
(from Dean Nakanishi's study "Between Worlds: Willamette University's Nisei in 1941-42"; 1997.)

Taul's father, Suyekich Watanabe, owned Watanabe Cleaners, located at 354 Union St NE. This business was the first meeting place for the Japanese Christian Church. Community members met in the upstairs living quarters. Perhaps due to this early leadership role in the Japanese Christian group, Watanabe and his family were interned earlier than the rest of the Salem community and sent to Washington instead of Tule Lake, CA. with the rest of Salem's Japanese community.

## The Japanese Community Church of Salem (based on history written by Rev. Chet Earls, 2003)

In 1923, the upstairs apartment of the Watanabe Cleaners was used as a meeting place for Japanese Christians. Reverend Seijiro Uemura, pastor of the Japanese Methodist Episcopal Church in Portland, came down twice a month to hold worship services in the evening because that was the most suitable time for the farmers. Thus began the Japanese Christian Mission Church in Salem. From this small beginning, the Japanese Christian group eventually occupied three different buildings as it grew.

The first Japanese Christian church was built in 1928 east of the Woodmen Hall at Chemawa. It moved in 1929 to the Hayesville Baptist Church building on Pacific Highway, one mile north of Salem. Outgrowing this second location, in early 1936 the Salem Council of Church Women helped the church to purchase the United Brethren Church property in Hazel Green, and also financed a parsonage.

Henry Yoshikai feels that the Salem Council of Church Women had a positive influence on the Japanese community of Salem by helping them establish their church in Hayesville and helping families prepare for internment when it was apparent

the government was forcing all Japanese into internment camps.

*"I always attributed the acceptance of the Japanese here to the Church Women in Salem — we always had a strong church here and I think that helped,"* Yoshikai said.

Another business owner was Francis Kunihiro Tanaka. He was the chef at the Marion Hotel for 18 years and built a loyal clientele who followed him when he opened his own place in 1933. Tokyo Sukiyaki at 222-1/2 North Commercial, above Fitts Fish House, was a popular lunch spot for businessmen and hosted the annual graduation banquet for the sons and daughters of the Japanese community. However, after Pearl Harbor, in just two months, customers dwindled to a trickle. Vandals broke the neon sign and the windows. ***"It was useless to stay open. In February 1942, we reluctantly closed the restaurant,"*** Henry Tanaka, Francis's son, said.

The Japanese Hand Laundry and Dry Cleaning at 445 Ferry Street, owned by the Tsukamoto family, didn't have the same problems with customer backlash; it was the internment that finished things for the Tsukamoto family. On February, 15, 1981, Phil Manzano of the Statesman Journal interviewed Hisaki Tsukamoto (the family's son). Manzano wrote that Hisaki remembered "the community being supportive and that many of attacks against Japanese in larger cities were not happening in Salem. It was business as usual at his father's Japanese Hand Laundry, until it was forced to close by a military law mandating closure of any Japanese business within 1-1/2 mile radius of water or power facilities. He said, 'It was my father's lifetime of work and we sold everything as junk. Items like a large roll-top desk, brass cash register or school-type wall clock, were sold as scrap — 10 cents on the dollar.'"

Frank Hideyasu Fukuda (Roy K. Fukuda's son) grew up in the Lake Labish farming community, first living in the Quinaby area, and later moving to the property on the corner of Highway 99 and Lakeside Drive in Lake Labish. The family had a



*10th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Salem Community Church, 1933*

*Courtesy of the Oregon State Library*



# Japanese Voices from the Northwest

gas station and grocery store there. The building is now home to Northwest RV Sales.

The family lived in a building next to the gas station that had a 2nd floor space called Fukuda Hall. Frank worked on his father's farm, attended local Salem schools, and graduated from Salem High School in 1934. He also had a peddler's truck, selling local produce, tofu and other goods to Japanese families in the Brooks and Independence area. This was a very common small business at that time when cars were few and public transportation was not readily available.

It wasn't just work from dawn until dusk, though it may often have felt like that as Frank's peer, Tatsuro "Tats" Yada, later recalled, *"Everything was hand labor from early morning 'til dark."* However, members of the Japanese community did find time to play, boasting a number of community social and sporting groups.

The eldest of five siblings, Tats was always athletic, as were his brothers. The Yada brothers and many other Japanese boys played on a winning Japanese baseball team called Yamato. Salem's only all Japanese team, *Yamato*, won the 1937 Portland Japanese Association League Championship.

Yada later wrote in his personal history published by the Sons of Labish, that the community was "closely knit, bound together by their language and culture. They had two community halls and gathered often. Potlucks were held quite often; Japanese entertainment and movies were shown. Traditional New Year's celebrations were observed. Fearing that the children might forget their cultural heritage, Japanese language classes were held each Saturday morning. Many families even installed large Japanese style wooden tubs (furo) in their homes, reminders of their homes in Japan."

Yada was born in the Parkrose area of Portland on June 8, 1916. His parents Misao and Hatsuno Yada were married 1915, and in 1918 when Tats was two, his family moved to Lake Labish. His father, Misao Yada, came to the Brooks area on



*Tats Yada, high school wrestling photo. Yada won the 1934 State Wrestling Championship his Senior year.*



*Hatsuno Yada at Tule Lake*

his own volition, not as one of the many Japanese farmers encouraged by Roy K. Fukuda. Misao leased land directly from M.L. Jones, and raised various truck crops: lettuce, beets, carrots, green onions, radishes, spinach and celery.

Tats attended Hazel Green Elementary, Parrish Middle School, and graduated from the old Salem High in 1934. He then attended Willamette University, where he was on the football team for 4 years, and graduated in 1938 with a teaching certificate in physical education. He coached wrestling in high school while he ran the family farm. On his 21st birthday, he celebrated by purchasing the Labish land his family had farmed for over 20 years. He was well established and well-known in the Salem community. Right after the attack on Pearl Harbor, he was appointed the only Japanese American civilian policeman, probably in an effort to quell actions against the Japanese. But this was to be short lived.

When Tats purchased his family's land from Jones, he cemented his connection to the Labish area and laid a pathway home from internment. The Yada family was just one of five to come back to Salem after the war. Another returnee was Henry Michio Yoshikai.

Ten years Yada's junior, Henry Yoshikai was born in Lake Labish in 1926 to Utaro and Tora from Fukuoka, Japan. They were married in 1920 and had six children, but two died in infancy. Of the remaining, brothers Tom and Henry lived in Salem after the war, and sisters Yoshie and Lillie moved to Washington and California respectively.

Henry's father, Utaro Yoshikai, first came to Oregon to do hop farming in Independence in 1920. The family then moved to the Lake Labish area in 1921 to work for the Yada-Nakata celery farm. They later leased a seven-acre plot of Lake Labish land from Ron Jones Sr. in 1932.

*"This was about the time that 20 to 25 Japanese farming families were living in the area. Some had 20 acres, but most had approximately seven*



# Japanese Voices from the Northwest

acres, which is what we farmed. Many others had about 5 acres. Even though the acreage was small, we sort of eked out a living," Henry said. December 7, 1941, brought this bucolic lifestyle to an abrupt end -- but the farmers were asked by the Celery Growers Association to put in the summer crops even though they knew they would be forced to leave before the harvest. They and their families were to embark on a heart-wrenching journey with only uncertainty ahead of them.

Some of the farms were taken over by workers who had been employed by the Japanese farmers. These workers had labored for many years in the celery fields. However, the farms may not have produced as much after the Japanese were removed. Henry surmised: *"I don't think the people who took over the land were as productive, partly because they didn't know the greenhouse technique, which is what enabled us to produce two harvests a season instead of one."* Another factor was the changing market for celery; the green variety of celery was gaining in popularity and could be grown successfully in other areas of the country.

## Lives Interrupted WWII Changed Lives Forever

*"How could I as a 6-month-old child born in this country be declared by my own Government to be an enemy alien?" California Congressman Robert Matsui (from Strangers from a Different Shore; a History of Asian Americans, pg. 392, by Robert Takaki)*

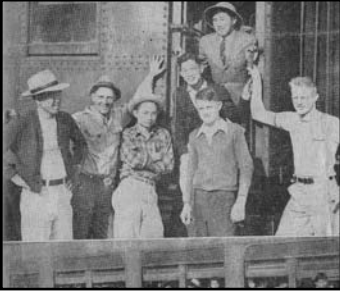
Having been designated as "enemy aliens," all Japanese were prohibited from living in Military Zone No. 1, which included the western half of Washington, Oregon and California, and the southern half of Arizona. Other prohibited areas were called Military Zone No. 2, and included areas around airports, dams, power plants, harbors and military installations. This resulted in the full scale evacuation of 120,000 people in a very short period of time. They had to leave their homes,



*Notices like this appeared over night in Japanese American communities, ordering anyone of Japanese descent to report to staging areas and prepare for "evacuation" to the internment camps.*

businesses, farms, property and most of their belongings, because they could take *“only what they could carry.” This amounted to about 50 pounds per person, or two suitcases full.* (from *War comes to the Church Door*, by Eleanor Breed, pg 35, in *Only What We Could Carry*).

After interminably long (sometimes several days) journeys on decrepit trains with the shades pulled down, the Japanese arrived at ten huge internment camps, most in remote desert areas. These ten locations were: Gila River and Poston in Arizona, Jerome and Rohwer in Arkansas, Manzanar and Tule Lake in California, Amache in Colorado, Minidoka in Idaho, Topaz in Utah, and Heart Mountain in Wyoming.



*Salem internees board the train for Tule Lake, Ca. on June 1, 1942. Many caucasian friends were horrified at what was happening and showed their support by accompanying their peers to the station. Here a young Mark Hatfield says goodbye to his fellow Americans. Hatfield later called it one of the darkest days he had ever experienced.*

In these camps, internees were assigned to barracks, each barrack building about 20 X 120 feet long, divided into four to six rooms. Each room was 20 X 20 feet, and meant to house one family (between 5-8 persons). The room had one potbellied stove (coal-burning), a single electric light hanging from the ceiling, and an Army cot and blanket for each person.

Life in the camps was regimented — in some ways similar to military life, with communal meals in great mess halls, and communal toilets, bathing areas, and laundry facilities. The barracks had no running water or kitchens; women had to get accustomed to not cooking for their families. One Portland internee described it thus: *“My mother washed clothes by hand, on a washboard, every day, since we had very few clothes. On rainy days, she had to dry the clothes on a clothes line across the room. She had to adjust to no more cooking or washing dishes.”* The dust storms of their desert surroundings made it necessary to clean both their clothing and their barrack rooms frequently. One of the few pleasures they had was receiving mail ordered clothing from Montgomery Ward and Sears Roebuck. (from *“The Portland Assembly Center”*, by Mae Ninomiya, in the *Willamette Journal*, 2000, pg 94-96)

The close-knit Japanese traditional family was fragmented. The inmates of the





# Japanese Voices from the Northwest

camp quickly began to separate into peer groups: the children ate together; the growing adolescents gulped down their food in hopes of returning for seconds; the older people who wanted more quiet ate together. All were pressed to finish quickly by those assigned to clean up, so they could finish that unpleasant task. The peer groups, especially the boys, spent virtually all of their time together, completely outside the family unit.

## Individual Voices, Internment

**Frank Fukuda, Roy Fukuda:** Very soon after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the FBI came knocking on the doors of the Japanese farmers. They arrested selected issei members of the community (many of whom did not speak English) they deemed to be suspicious, and took them to detention centers in places like Missoula, Montana, and Sante Fe, New Mexico. One of those arrested was Roy Fukuda. His son, Frank, said later, *"He was real bitter. He was not a leader in any Japanese group."*

While Roy was taken to a detention center, Frank, along with his mother and sisters, was on the train that took Salem's Japanese community to Tule Lake, CA in June, 1942.

In February, 1943, the loyalty questionnaire was issued by the U.S. Government to all interned Japanese men, asking if they were willing to serve in the armed forces and renounce loyalty to Japan. Those who answered "yes" were deemed loyal, and were assigned to scattered internment camps in isolated areas. Frank and his family eventually ended up in Heart Mountain, Wyoming. Those who answered "no" were branded as disloyal and segregated into one camp: Tule Lake. Many of the older men were Japanese immigrants who were made ineligible for citizenship by state and federal Anti-Alien Laws and felt if they renounced Japan, they would become men without a country. Later, all adults, including women, had to answer the questionnaire.



*R.H. Frank Fukuda, after being drafted in 1945.*

In 1945, Frank Fukuda was drafted into the Army, but by the time he finished basic training, the war was over.

**Tatsuro “Tats” Yada and Family:** When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, the Lake Labish farmers had crops to consider. Fortunately for the Yadas, Ronald Jones offered to care for the Yadas’ 19-acre farm, as well as for their home. Other farmers who were leasing their land were forced to sell their household goods at great loss and had to leave many irreplaceable things, such as family photos and treasured items, behind.

Tats and his family boarded that train on June 1, 1942, along with 233 other Salem Japanese. *“There was a feeling this shouldn’t happen. But you couldn’t say much. In those days you just followed orders,”* Tats later wrote.



Ko Yada, with the 1937 Portland Japanese Association League Championship baseball team, Yamato.

*In J. Wesley Sullivan’s 1986 Statesman Journal column he quotes longtime local newsman, writer and political advisor Ethan Grant, who was present when the Japanese were sent off by train. “The Japanese were standing in the rain...They were stolid and quiet. I spotted a young man I had known. He was Ko Yada (Tats’ brother), who in the summer of 1939 had been a player on the American Legion’s Junior baseball team. Ko had been my catcher. He recognized me and smiled. I went over to talk to him. ‘Ko, first I want to know about your parents,’ I told him...‘Are they here?’*

*‘Yes, back there somewhere. They won’t let us stay together. My Dad is here, but not Mom...She can’t speak English and has been crying. She left at daylight this morning, saying she’s going back to Japan. It’s more than Dad can stand. Mr. Grant, do you know where they’re taking us?’*

*‘Hey, Jap, you’re supposed to keep your damn trap shut,’ a soldier told him, raising his rifle butt as if to strike Ko.” Grant moved away and never saw Ko Yada again after the train left with all of Salem’s Japanese on board, destination unknown.*

The Yada family was interned at Tule Lake. “Life in camp was just like prison,” Tats stated. Armed military police guarded the camp, and they were surrounded





# Japanese Voices from the Northwest

by barbed wire, guard towers and search lights. The seven Yadas lived in a one-room barrack, sleeping on army cots and hanging blankets to partition the room. Privacy was non-existent, and family life was nearly so, because everyone ate in large mess halls where they were served unpalatable meals of unfamiliar foods. Laundry facilities, toilets and showers were also communal, basic, hastily constructed and usually far from their barracks.

With his background in sports education, Yada volunteered to head a recreation program, organizing baseball leagues and other activities for the confined residents. But he hated the feeling of being imprisoned, so after a few months he volunteered to harvest beets in Eastern Oregon. When he got back to Tule Lake, his two brothers had received permission to leave camp to attend college in Nebraska. They were able to find a job for Tats, so he worked at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln for the next two years, fortunately avoiding incarceration for that period. The Japanese were permitted to live away from the West Coast (if they were accepted by colleges, businesses, etc.), but most of them did not have the money or wherewithal to do so. There was also the deterrent fact that all the governors of the western states, except Colorado, had announced that they would not accept relocated Japanese into their states.



Yoshikais at Tule Lake

## Henry Yoshikai and Family:

Henry was a sophomore (15) at Salem High School when Pearl Harbor took place. He said, *“After the war broke out things weren’t all that different as far as we [the kids and youth] were concerned. I was on the wrestling team and we would still go to Silverton for matches – the only difference was we had to be back before 8:30 p.m. because of the curfew (for the Japanese). But I was never afraid. There wasn’t the same hostility in Salem as there was elsewhere, except for a few small incidents, like the Tokyo Suki-yaki Restaurant. The restaurant, which had been real popular with Japanese and non-Japanese alike, closed. People stopped coming after Pearl Harbor happened. They threw rocks at it and did all kinds of damage.”*

On June 1, 1942, the train carried Henry and his family away from Salem as well, and deposited them at Tule Lake in the California desert. There they were met

with the starkest, most barren environment they had ever seen. This world was completely different than the one they had known. They were behind barbed wire, with guard towers occupied by armed soldiers. The six of them were assigned to one room in one of the hundreds of hastily constructed barracks. The barracks had no running water.

Family life was completely disrupted. In fact, Henry was invited to share the space next door with several former OSU students. They didn't have family with them because they had been attending university when the evacuation order was issued. This did give his family a little more space in their tiny room to fit in five people.

When the Tule Lake internees were assigned to other internment camps, the Yoshikais were sent to Heart Mountain, Wyoming, which was little different from Tule Lake—just colder in the winter. They continued to endure extreme temperatures, wind storms and isolation. Henry and his brother, Tom, both graduated from high school in Heart Mountain instead of the new Salem High School, which opened after they left. They were interned for two years before being drafted. Tom, the elder at 19, was drafted in 1944 and joined the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team; he served in France until the war's end. Henry, one year younger, was drafted in fall of 1945. By then the war was scaling down, and, due to his familiarity with the Japanese language, he served in the Military Intelligence Service in Okinawa during the reconstruction of Japan.



Ronald E. Jones, Sr.

**Madison L. Jones and his son Ronald E. Jones**  
*(being non-Japanese did not protect them from backlash)*

According to a research paper at Cal State Long Beach written by Ronald Jones Sr's niece, Janice Scott, in 1981, it the Jones family believes Ronald E. Jones Sr. lost his seat in the Oregon Senate because of his support of the Japanese Americans who leased his Lake Labish lands. Scott sent questionnaires to relatives and friends regarding their knowledge of this period.

His son, Ron Jones Jr., stated: *"Your uncle Ronald had served in the Oregon Legislature since about*



# Japanese Voices from the Northwest

*1936 and was running for his second term in the Senate in 1942. One of his opponents saw to it that his association with the Japanese....Father's statement that... 'Some Japanese might remain loyal,' was also criticized. You must remember the hatred of the Japanese that had been generated then."*

Ron Jones' widow, Madge, wrote of *"the terrible hate campaign"* and *"the phone calls we would have. People would just say 'Japanese lover' and hang up. Or 'Is Japanese Jones there?'...Ron was running for re-election to the State Senate at the time, and of course the hysteria of the times brought about his defeat."*

Her sister-in-law, Helen Jones, was a Willamette University student while Ron Jones was a Senator. She remembered *"he stood in the Legislature to plead for 'his' Japanese Americans and opposed sending them off to camps. He then found himself running against the tide of war hysteria... Maybe why Japanese attended Ron's funeral in large numbers and a few followed to the grave site could have been that he saved their things — or just that he tried to help them and lost. Anyway, I think it was probably the high point of his career. M.L. wanted Ronald to be Governor. Ronald did have political ambitions."*

Henry Yoshikai: *"I do know that Jones had hopes to become governor, but he didn't serve again after that loss. Certainly Ron Jones was very loyal to the Japanese as far as the evacuation went."*

Ron Jones enjoyed both business and social relationships with his Japanese tenant farmers. His niece remembers when she visited during the year-end holidays there would be many bottles of sake in the home, which were gifts from his Japanese friends and tenants. He and his family were held in high esteem by the Salem Japanese community. Many Japanese, some from three and four generations of the same family, attended Ron Jones Sr.'s funeral in Pioneer Cemetery on a very rainy day in December 1973.

## *Serving in a Time of Personal and Collective Turmoil*

As determined by the loyalty questionnaire, 85 percent of the American-born Japanese men were loyal to the country of their birth, and wanted nothing more than to prove their loyalty by fighting in the war. They were given that opportunity when in February 1943 President Roosevelt endorsed the formation of an

all-Nisei combat team which is known as the 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT). Originally comprised of Japanese Americans who were already in the military in Hawaii, it was segregated into one battalion after the war started, because its soldiers were classified as enemy aliens. To that battalion, more than 2,500 newly enlisted men from Hawaii and 3,500 men from ten internment camps were added. The camp recruits had been incarcerated for nearly two years when the battalion was formed. The unit's motto was "Go for Broke," which comes from gambling slang in Hawaii, and means "shoot the works" or "all or nothing." The 100th Battalion earned the title "Purple Heart Battalion" for extraordinary heroism and bravery in battle. This entire unit became famous as the most decorated unit of its size and length of service in American military history. About 25,000 Nisei served in the European theatre of WWII.

In addition to the 442nd, there were 6,000 nisei soldiers assigned to the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) in the South Pacific. Their knowledge of the Japanese language was an essential secret weapon against the Empire of Japan. They served on every embattled island in the Pacific, fought with Merrill's Marauders in Burmese jungles, interrogated Japanese prisoners, worked in the Pentagon tracking Japan's navy and army forces, and interpreted both top-secret messages between Germany and Japan, and intercepted Japanese military orders. They were pledged to secrecy by the U.S. government, therefore no one knew of their contributions; they were met with silence at home. Almost three decades later, the secrecy order was lifted and the world learned what they did, but by then the country was focused on other wars and priorities.

#### **Salem Japanese Americans who served in the 100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team:**

**George Ishida** — severely wounded in Italy, recipient of the Purple Heart. After lengthy recuperation, returned to Salem. He was the owner of Court Street Jewelry and Watch Repair.

**John Kyono** — drafted from Salem before family was interned; killed in action in Italy. His name is on the war memorial in Hood River because his family was originally from there; they moved to Salem in the 1930s.

**Tom Oye** — drafted from Willamette Law School in 1941; served in Italy and France as machine gunner, promoted to Battalion Sgt. Major by end of war. Continued in Army Reserves until 1971; retired as Lt. Colonel, received law degree from DePaul University in 1953.



# Japanese Voices from the Northwest

**John George Sugai** — Family moved to Eastern Oregon before WWII; drafted from Minidoka, served in Anti-tank Company of 442nd.

**Henry Tanaka** — drafted in Indiana after graduation from Earlham College, served in Cleveland in 1944. After war, received MS in social administration from Western Reserve University, was president of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) from 1972-74, worked on achieving redress and reparations for interned Japanese which was signed by President Reagan in 1988.

**Tom Yoshikai** — drafted from Heart Mountain Internment Camp; served in Italy. He had always assumed he would become a farmer like his father. But while in internment camp he was encouraged to get an education by one of his teachers. He took that advice and used the GI Bill to attend Willamette University, graduating in 1955 with a business degree; he became a tax auditor with the state.

*NOTE: The story of Tom and Georgette Yoshikai's internment experience was chronicled in a Statesman-Journal 3-part series entitled "Beyond Barbed Wire" by Stephanie Knowlton on June 3-5, 2007.*

## Also Served:

**Frank Fukuda** — drafted from Heart Mountain Camp; trained in Texas; war ended before he was deployed. Returned to Salem and took over his father's Union Service Station on corner of Hwy 99 and Lakeside Drive.

**Bill Matsuda** — hop farmer in Independence. Served in the Air Force during the war. When he returned, found his farm destroyed; moved to the Portland area.

**Ken Takayama** — drafted from Salem in March 1942, just before internment occurred; served in the U.S. Returned to farm in Lake Labish.

**Edward Ko Yada** — drafted from Nebraska where he was working; served in Military Intelligence Service (MIS) in South Pacific and Japan. He returned to Salem; later became assistant manager of JC Market in Newport.

**Joe Josaku Yada** — drafted from college in Nebraska, served in MIS in Japan. After the war, he graduated from the University of WA., and spent most of his career with SeaAsia and Uwajimaya Asian Market in Seattle.

**Henry Yoshikai** — drafted from Heart Mountain Internment Camp; served with MIS after war ended, including one year in Okinawa. Returned to Salem; went into insurance and dry cleaning industries.

## The Long Road Home

*The West Coast Japanese communities didn't reemerge immediately after the*

war because on January 2, 1945, when the War Relocation Authority (WRA) released the internees, it advised them to stay away from the Pacific Coast. The WRA claimed that still prevalent anti-Japanese feelings would make it hard for the Japanese to rebuild their communities. This statement left many internees at a loss; paralyzed by lack of options, they remained in the camps long after the government told them they could leave. Eventually, the WRA needed to close the camps for economic and legal reasons, and announced that everyone was completely exonerated, and were permitted to go anywhere, even back to the West Coast.

*“Young people were advised to disregard the desires of the elderly ones, who anxiously wanted to keep their families together, yet knew of no way to relocate. The young were encouraged to strike out alone, to work in new, strange cities, and break family ties with the hope that parents would be forced to follow. We were now told that we had been cleared to go anywhere...except to the Pacific Coast that had always been our home.”*  
(Lone Heart Mountain, by Estelle Ishigo, 1972, pg 86)

When the camps were closed, the Japanese were told to start anew where they were not known; advised to take their place in a society. The only jobs available to them were as domestics, farm laborers, cannery workers and other jobs where persons of color were tolerated. No matter what one's profession had been, and regardless of one's ability, internees were expected to accept any job to gain release from camp. The WRA called this “achieving freedom.” Some 4,000 inmates of Heart Mountain Camp left in 1944-45, but many more could not. Many had elderly parents to care for and no place to go.



*People were interned for more than 2 years. They had left everything behind, their belongings sold. When the camps were shut down, few had homes to return to.*

### Salem Returnees

As for the Salem Japanese Americans, only five families returned: the Fukudas, the Yadas, the Yoshikais, the Ishidas, and the Takayamas. Henry Yoshikai said many of the Japanese farmers had no real reason to come back, because they didn't own the land they had farmed and most of their friends were gone. *“If they didn't own the property, they didn't feel comfortable coming back in*





# Japanese Voices from the Northwest

*after internment and taking away someone's farm. If, for example, you took over my dad's property when the war broke out and established yourself, it's not like Ron [Jones] would say, 'Okay, thanks for all your hard work, but you have to leave now because they (the Japanese) are all back.' So, there really wasn't anything to return to and often there were opportunities elsewhere," Henry said.*

According to the 1940 census, of Oregon's 4,000 Japanese interned in June 1942, only half returned to Oregon after the war ended in 1945. The number of Japanese in Polk and Marion counties in 1940 amounted to 221, that is: 85 Issei and 136 Nisei. *(from Willamette Journal, 2000: Between Worlds: Willamette University's Nisei in 1941-1942, by Dean Nakanishi)*



Lake Labish during harvest

## Individual Voices, after internment

In the Lake Labish community, the Japanese farmers were on good terms with their white and Filipino neighbors. When they were forced to evacuate on very short notice, some of them entrusted their land and crops to the people they had hired to work for them.

Ronald Jones hired some of the other farmers to farm land the Japanese had to give up. The Phillips family farmed the Yada land. They were happy to live in the large Yada home, complete with koi pond and concrete bridge in the garden. Although this house and farm were well cared for during the Yadas' absence, the irony is that the house burned to the ground shortly after they returned, before they could even move into it again. Both the Phillips and Yada families' belongings were lost.

Tats Yada wanted to return to Lake Labish right away, but because the tenant hired by Ron Jones during his internment had his crop in, Tats could not immediately come back.

In May 1946, Yada married Masako Onishi from Portland. After a short time in Portland running a hotel, they came to Brooks to salvage the family farm and rebuild, and have been there ever since. Yada was active with his al ma mater,

Willamette, and served as a trustee. After his retirement in 1981, he continued to tend a half-acre garden and donated many hundreds of pounds of fresh produce to Union Gospel Mission in Salem.

Tats Yada passed away in 2003. Masako continues to live on the farm in Brooks. The Japanese farmers are disappearing once more from Lake Labish, but this time from more natural causes.

Roy K. Fukuda's family also returned to Salem. After all, Roy Fukuda had deep roots in Lake Labish soil, having pioneered and labored in the area for nearly 40 years. By 1940, his health was failing, so his son Frank was called back from college to help with the family business. By the time the war ended in 1945, Roy Fukuda was in very poor health. The rigors of life in the desert concentration camps did nothing to help his deteriorating condition. He passed away five years later at age 76.

Frank did not return directly to Salem, but first went to Los Angeles in June 1946 to marry Joy Kodama whom he had met at Heart Mountain. They planned to be coproprietors of a food store in Portland with another couple. When that did not work out, they bought a small hotel on 5th and Burnside. However, the illness of Frank's parents brought them back to Salem permanently, and he took over his father's service station.

Henry Yoshikai and his family did return to Salem in the fall of 1947. For him, Salem was home: *"I probably would have come back after the war even if I didn't have family here. I had friends here. I had things to come back to."* At that time, jobs were hard to find, and Henry was fortunate to go to work in the warehouse of Ron Jones' farm. His oldest sister Yoshie was also offered a job as housekeeper for the Jones' family, so she was able to bring their parents back to Salem. They lived above the Jones' garage. Ronald Jones remained a friend and benefactor to the few returning Japanese after the war. *"When we came back we didn't have much, just a few suitcases,"* Henry recalled.

Henry Yoshikai went into the insurance business, and the dry cleaning industry. He became active with the Salem Junior Chamber of Commerce and served as its president in 1960. In 1952, he married Alyce Ayako Wada in Salem, whom he first met in 1943 at Heart Mountain Internment Camp.

If there was a positive side effect these camps had, it was the fact that they introduced many more Japanese young people to each other than they would have



# Japanese Voices from the Northwest

met had they not been forcibly brought together in one place by the U.S. government. There were after all, between 10,000 -15,000 Japanese confined together in each of 10 internment camps situated in remote areas of the country.

Ironically, during the war, German and Italian prisoners of war were brought in to work on many of Ronald Jones and A.F. Hayes' farmlands. "They were a good replacement for the boys who were fighting overseas," stated one of the farmers. However, they were also replacing the Japanese who had been ordered to leave their farms and incarcerated in America's own concentration camps.

## The Redress Movement

In 1983, three pro bono legal teams filed *coram nobis* petitions in U.S. District Courts in Portland, Seattle, and Sacramento on behalf of Minoru Yasui, Gordon Hirabayashi and Fred Korematsu, respectively. A *coram nobis* petition seeks to have an earlier conviction — for which the sentence has already been served — reopened in court and examined on the basis of new evidence, for the purpose of vacating the conviction and expunging the record. These three cases succeeded in vacating the wartime convictions, in 1985, 1986, and 1983 respectively, and started what would become the Japanese American Redress movement to right the wrongs perpetrated upon the Japanese during WWII. (from the Afterword in "Only What We Could Carry", by William Hohri, 2000, pg 397-398)

This began with the initial effort by the Japanese American Citizens League to obtain financial compensation from the government, which resulted in the Japanese American Evacuation Claims Act of 1948. However, the gap between claims and the settlements paid by the government were wide indeed. Moreover, the claimants were required to document their losses, which was an almost ludicrous task given the manner in which they were subjected to evacuation. How could a family who had to sell or leave everything on two weeks notice



A group photo of internees at Tule Lake, CA. many of whom spent more than two years of their lives kept behind barbed wire watched by armed guards.



*It wasn't until the 90s that letters of apology were mailed to former internees along with redress payments.*

or less, or a farmer who had left machinery, orchards or crops, prove after the tumult of their leave-taking, how much they lost five years later? Most had no records to make a claim. Of those who were actually able to file claims, the settlements amounted to less than 10 cents for every dollar lost; and when 1942 prices versus post-war inflation is factored in, the amount became 5 cents on a dollar. (from *"Nisei: the Quiet Americans"*, by Bill Hosokawa, 1969, pp 443-446)

But the precedent had been set, Congress had recognized the error of the evacuation and the justification for compensation claims. Other legislation was being adopted which affected the Japanese. The Soldiers' Brides Bill was amended to allow Japanese brides and children of American servicemen to enter the U.S. without regard to the Oriental Exclusion Act. More than 200 private bills were sponsored by individual members of Congress to restore tenure to Issei and Nisei who were in the federal civil service.

Meanwhile the California Alien Land Law was being challenged by several cases, and the Supreme Court reversed the lower court's decision, finding it unconstitutional to deny equal protection regarding property rights based on race. Further cases found the Alien Land Law unenforceable. This law was finally defeated by popular vote in 1956. Other states had similar laws, including Oregon. Most have been repealed—Oregon's in 1949, when the Oregon Supreme Court, in the case of Kenji Namba vs. McCourt, became the first highest tribunal of any state to declare an Alien Land Law unconstitutional. (from *"The Bamboo People: The Law and Japanese Americans"*, by Frank Chuman, 1976, pg. 217).

The Japanese American Citizens League worked tirelessly, especially through tenacious Mike Masaoka, to address issues affecting the Japanese, and in 1952 it played a major role in the passage of the Walter-McCarran Act, which provided in effect for the repeal of the Oriental Exclusion Act of 1924. This eliminated race





# Japanese Voices from the Northwest

as a barrier to naturalization. It gave the Japanese equality with other immigrants. The Issei were at last eligible to become U.S. citizens. And they did — by 1965, 46,000 of them had become citizens of a country they had labored to establish themselves in — and for which they had endured the hardship of internment. In the Bicentennial Year 1976, as part of the observation, President Gerald Ford formally rescinded Executive Order 9066, recognizing *“our national mistake as well as our national achievements.”*

Still, there was something missing. The Japanese internment was a physical loss of place and property, as well as a deep psychological loss of face. They were shamed before the whole nation as being untrustworthy and dangerous. They were segregated from the rest of the American public and disrespected as humans because of their race. How does a government who was the instigator of all that happened to them atone for its actions? The answer was proposed by the Japanese American Citizens League, working through the legislative system they published a rationale for redress for its 1978 national convention, arguing that:

*“...redress for the injustices of 1942-46 is not an isolated Japanese American issue; it is an issue of concern for all Americans. Restitution does not put a price tag on freedom or justice. The issue is not to recover what cannot be recovered. The issue is to acknowledge that mistake by providing proper redress to victims of injustice, and thereby make such injustices less likely to recur.”*

The Japanese community was at first divided about reopening the wounds of the past. Most had not spoken of what happened to their children or grandchildren. But not speaking about such a traumatic event caused inner pain, and in 1980, with the creation by Congress of the Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC), nationwide hearings were held. The Japanese internees finally found their voices. When they began to tell their stories, the floodgates of memory were opened, and at last the vital catharsis could begin. During the hearings, the commissioners were sometimes forced to remind the witnesses that there was a time limit for their testimonies. One woman said that she had waited 40 years to tell her story, and they would have to wait until she was finished. *(based on “Japanese Americans: From Relocation to Redress; 1991, pp 188-189; and website on Redress of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles CA.)*

After hearing from over 750 witnesses, the majority of whom were internees, and

18 months of exhaustive research and investigation, the CWRIC issued its findings in a 467-page report entitled "Personal Justice Denied," on February 22, 1983 concluding that the "exclusion and detention of Japanese Americans were not determined by military conditions but were the result of race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership." This report recommended that the federal government issue a national apology, compensate each surviving eligible individual \$20,000, and set up an educational and humanitarian foundation, among other measures.



*President Ronald Reagan signs the 1988 Civil Liberties Act that authorized redress payments of \$20,000 to surviving former internees.*

On August 10, 1988, Congress passed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, and President Ronald Reagan authorized payment of \$20,000 and apologies to an estimated 60,000 former internees. Their original number was 120,000 in 1942. The Office of Redress Administration was established to administer the payments and issuance of apologies. Again the JAACL stepped in to recommend reducing the onerous documentation requirements to verify eligibility for the payments; its recommendations were adopted in 1990, the first letters of apology and redress checks were signed by President George H.W. Bush, and presented to the oldest survivors of the internment at a Department of Justice ceremony.

## A New Community

### The Japanese Presence in Oregon and Salem Today

It has been 63 years since the closure of the last internment camp in 1946. For many years after the war, Japanese Americans did not dare to raise their voices or profiles; instead they left the camps and tried to rebuild their lives with quiet, industry and determination. In 1986, a National Geographic article, "Japanese Americans — Home At Last," made these findings: Twenty-five years after the camps were closed, a higher proportion of Japanese Americans were engaged in professional occupations than were white Americans. By 1981, 88 percent of Sansei (third generation) children were attending college, and of these, 92 percent planned professional careers. Their parents had already entered a wide variety of





# Japanese Voices from the Northwest

professions to lead the way: education (teachers, school administrators, professors), medicine, medical research, architecture, finance and foreign exchange.

Today, there are many people of Japanese heritage living in Salem, but unlike before WWII, they live in all sections of the city. They are teachers, college instructors, doctors, nurses, dentists, state employees, housewives, company owners and workers, translators, accountants, and artists. They have come from all over the U.S., Japan and even other countries. Many ties between Salem and Japan have been established since early 1900s. The following are some of them:



## Tokyo International University/Willamette University/ Tokyo International University of America

The idea of a sister college relationship between Tokyo International University (TIU) and Willamette University (WU) began in the 1960s when Dr. Taizo Kaneko founded the International College of Commerce and Economics (ICCE) in Kawagoe City, Japan. The focus of this college was international exchange and international education.

This year is the 20th anniversary of Tokyo International University of America in Salem. Since it opened, more than 2,000 students have enrolled in their 10-month immersion program. Many have gone on to take jobs in international relations and international companies. Lasting ties have been made with Willamette students and with *tomodachi* (Japanese for "friendship") families in Salem. In addition to the students' academic and cross-cultural achievements, TIUA, Willamette University and TIU faculty have conducted many collaborative studies, and presented projects at various conferences. They have also developed courses such as Intercultural Management and Economics of Developing Countries.

## Oregon-Toyama Sister State Program

Around 1989, Toyama Prefecture, which is located on the Japan Sea coast of the island of Honshu, proposed a sister state-prefectural relationship with Oregon. After consideration and period of courtship, in October, 1991, Governor Barbara Roberts traveled to Toyama to formalize a Sister State-Prefecture relationship. While sister city relationships are very common between American cities and cit

ies around the world, sister state relationships are more unusual. The purpose is for long-term friendship and mutual benefit, and to advance interchanges and cooperation in the fields of education, culture and economics.

#### Several programs started in 1990:

- A teacher exchange program was initiated in 1990, with one Toyama teacher coming to Oregon for a two-year period, and one Oregon teacher going to Toyama for one year.
- An exchange employee program, with one employee from Toyama and one from Oregon working in a state or prefectural office for one year. This program ran from 1990 until 1999.



#### Other exchanges (partial list):

- 1986: Business exchange program between Tektronix in Beaverton, and NEC in Toyama.
- 1989: Forest Grove and Nyuzen in Toyama established a sister city relationship.
- 1991: Minami High School in Toyama City began a school exchange program with East County schools and established an ongoing exchange with Gresham High School.
- 1992: 3-month exposition, Japan Exposition Toyama, was held in Toyama with a sister state exhibit from Oregon. Several Oregon companies and organizations participated (Butters Gallery, Quintana Galleries, Ed's House of Gems, Oregon Rock Shop, Oregon Historical Society, McLoughlin House, City of Pendleton).
- 1993: Pioneer Place officials established sister department store program with Marier Department Store in Toyama City.
- 1993: Reynolds High School began exchange with Dimond High School in Toyama. Reynolds hosted 16 Toyama students in March; Reynolds students went to Toyama for a month-long visit.
- 1993: Kyotaru Fellows (Oregon teacher delegation led by Elizabeth King of Oregon Dept. of Education) visit Toyama as part of their study tour in Japan.
- 1994: Toyama Prefectural Government hosted the Oregon Trail Band on a tour of Toyama. The Trail Band performed for a full house of over 500 at the Toyama Culture Hall.
- 1994: Judge Robert Thornton visited Toyama during a tour of Japan with Nisei



# Japanese Voices from the Northwest

vets. Judge Thornton is the recipient on the Order of the Sacred Treasure bestowed by the Emperor of Japan. His visit included meetings to establish a sister Police Academy exchange between Oregon and Toyama.

- **1994:** 2 State Senators, the Director of Economic Development and other staff traveled to Toyama to meet with Prefectural officials, visited places that have exchange programs with Oregon, and conducted other business.
- **2006:** Governor Ted Kulongoski and a delegation traveled to Toyama for the 15th anniversary celebration of this relationship.

## Salem-Kawagoe Sister Cities, Inc.

Building on the foundation of the 20-year relationship between Willamette University and Tokyo International University in Kawagoe City, in 1986 the City of Salem and Kawagoe City formalized a sister city relationship. On August 1, 1986, Mayor Sue Miller and Mayor Kiichi Kawai signed the declaration in Salem City Hall amid much celebration and festivities. Many dignitaries from Kawagoe, a traditional festival band, and 14 Kawagoe Jaycee members were part of the Japanese delegation.

This was the beginning of many visiting exchanges between officials, students and citizens from our two cities. North Salem High students are selected for student delegations to Kawagoe City High School every other year. Junior high students from Kawagoe are selected to come to Salem every other year during August. All the students stay with families in their sister cities, thereby experiencing family life in America and Japan. Salem's sister city delegations to Kawagoe usually include city officials such as the Mayor, City Council members, and the president and directors of the Salem-Kawagoe Sister Cities Committee as well as members at large.

As officially sanctioned relationships, the Mayor and City Manager's Office give administrative support to all Salem's sister city programs. However, funding for any sister city-related activities is not part of the city's budget. Therefore, the Salem-Kawagoe Sister Cities group is funded in part by annual dues, and has for many years raised operating funds by selling bottled water at the State Fair. This



*Mayor Sue Harris Miller of Salem signs the sister city agreement with Kiichi Kawai, the mayor of Kawagoe, Japan. Photo by Gerry Lewis of the Statesman Journal, reprinted in the 1986 Oregon Blue Book.*

activity has provided financing to keep this organization and its educational and cultural exchange programs operating. The program will celebrate its 25th anniversary of in 2011.

### Kawagoe-Salem Friendship Societys

In addition to the official sister city relationship, there is also a grassroots organization called the Kawagoe-Salem Friendship Society in Kawagoe. It was established in 1986 to commemorate the International Year of Peace, and the signing of the Sister City Agreement between Kawagoe and Salem that year. The members are Kawagoe citizens who have a strong interest in promoting friendship and understanding between people from Salem and Kawagoe in particular, and with other peoples of the world in general. Many of them have traveled to Salem and have had homestay experiences here. The founder and chair of this group is Barry Duell, an English professor at TIU who is originally from Salem.

### Alyce Yoshikai Elementary

In 1994, Alyce Ayako (Wada) Yoshikai became the first Japanese American in Oregon to earn the honor of having a school named after her. Alyce Yoshikai Elementary School is located in the Jan Ree area of north Salem.

Alyce was born and raised in Wapato, Washington, about 7 miles southwest of Yakima. She was in her early teens when Executive Order 9066 was enacted.

She and her family were first taken to the Portland Assembly Center and then transferred to Heart Mountain internment camp in Wyoming, where she encountered her first Nisei teachers and realized she too could enter the teaching profession. Alyce was able to leave camp through the work release program to do farm labor near Nyssa, Idaho. The family remained there after the war and she graduated from Nyssa High School in 1947.





# Japanese Voices from the Northwest

In 1951, she graduated from Eastern Oregon College of Education in La Grande, and got her first job at Richmond Elementary School in Salem. In 1952 she married Henry Yoshikai of Salem, whom she had met while both were teenagers interned at Heart Mountain. The Yoshikai family is one of the pioneering Japanese farming families of Lake Labish.



*This portrait of Alyce Yoshikai hangs in the entry of the school that is her namesake.*

After ten years as a 2nd grade teacher at Richmond Elementary, Alyce enrolled at Western Oregon State College in Monmouth, and earned her MS in Education in the early 1960s. Starting in 1962, she served as principal at several elementary schools in Salem, among them, Roberts, Mountainview, Baker, Candalaria, Hayesville and Schirle schools. Between 1984 and her retirement in 1989, she served as the Director of Elementary Education for the Salem-Keizer School District, reaching the highest level in the profession she aspired to when she was an internee at Heart Mountain, Wyoming.

Alyce served as president of the Salem-Kawagoe Sister Cities organization for five years, and was on the Salem Hospital Board for 18 years. She has worked diligently to foster a strong relationship between Salem and Kawagoe, and has been committed to the student exchanges the organization funds.

## Japanese Language Classes

The Japanese language was introduced into the Salem-Keizer School District curriculum in 1984 at North Salem High School. It has been taught continuously there for 26 years, and is now taught at the high school and middle school level.

|                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <i>North Salem High School</i>      | <i>1984 - present (26 years)</i> |
| <i>South Salem High School</i>      | <i>1993 - present (17 years)</i> |
| <i>Sprague High School</i>          | <i>1992 - 2002 (11 years)</i>    |
| <i>McNary High School</i>           | <i>1986 - 1994 (9 years)</i>     |
| <i>McKay High School</i>            | <i>1987 - 1993 (6 years)</i>     |
| <i>Parrish Middle School</i>        | <i>1992 - present (18 years)</i> |
| <i>Howard Street Charter School</i> | <i>1993 - 2008 (15 years)</i>    |

**Leslie Middle School***1994 - 2000 (7 years)*

Since 1993, Susan Tanabe, South Salem High School's Japanese instructor, has taken members of the South Salem High School Japanese National Honor Society (which includes students from Sprague and West Salem high schools) on a two-week Spring Break trip to Japan every other year. The students experience intensive cultural and linguistic study, stay in youth hostels and home-stays, and visit important ancient sites and modern marvels in *Miyajima, Kyoto, Kawagoe,* and *Tokyo*, as well as the Peace Park and *Museum in Hiroshima*.

**Matsu Kai Japanese Women's Club**

This small social club for Japanese women celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2008. Its purpose is to promote social interaction with other women of like cultural heritage. The Salem Japanese community is no longer centrally located in Lake Labish as; instead it is now absorbed into the whole of the City of Salem. This makes it difficult to find others who share the same heritage.

**Japanese Businesses in Salem**

*A June 20, 2006, press release from Governor Ted Kulongoski's office stated that Japan is a leading trading partner with Oregon, and a hundred Japanese companies employ more than 10,000 Oregon workers. The following are three Japanese companies which have established themselves in Salem.*

**Yamasa Corporation USA**, In June 1992, in a state-of-the-art plant in Fairview Industrial Park, Yamasa Corporation USA began producing soy sauce. The soy sauce brewing process hasn't changed much in 350 years. The company's parent plant is in Choshi, Chiba Prefecture, Japan. The 65,000 sq ft plant is built on a 25-acre site, and is capable of supplying over 1.7 million gallons of soy sauce per year.

**IMEX America Corporation**, IMEX is a Japanese company based in Okayama, which began making refilled toner and ink cartridges in Salem in October 2002. It is an environmentally sustainable company, as every recycled printer cartridge saves 2.5 liters of oil.

**SANYO North America Corporation**, In October 2008, SANYO North American Corp. broke ground on its new factory, and is scheduled to begin operations in October 2009. In this location they will produce solar ingot and wafers used in the manufacture of solar photovoltaic cells.





The World Beat Gallery opened in 2006. It is located on the 2nd Floor of the Reed Opera House, on the corner of Court and Liberty in downtown Salem, Oregon.

Salem Multicultural Institute  
P.O. Box 4611  
Salem, OR 97302  
503.581.2004  
[www.salemmulticultural.org](http://www.salemmulticultural.org)

Salem Multicultural Institute was founded in 1997 to create an atmosphere of openness and appreciation for people of all ethnic backgrounds. We believe that education about and exposure to the traditions of different cultures can counter intolerance and enrich the community. We are best known for our World Beat Festival, held at Riverfront Park the last weekend of June.

**THE WORLD BEAT GALLERY  
IS SUPPORTED IN PART BY THE FOLLOWING, THANK YOU:**

- A grant of Transit Occupancy Tax from the City of Salem
- A grant from the Oregon Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts
- Funding from the Marion County Cultural Corporation
- The Spirit Mountain Community Fund
- The Pioneer Trust Bank Salem Foundation

*Thank you to the following exhibit contributors:*

**Exhibit Development, Artifact Loans:**

Oregon Nikkei Endowment  
Statesman Journal Reporter Stephanie Knowleton  
Statesman Journal Photographer Kobbi R. Blair  
& the Statesman Journal Archives  
Masako Yada  
Mako Hayashi-Mayfield  
Henry Yoshikai  
Joy Fukuda  
Brian Fukuda  
Sons of Labish  
Oregon State Library Archives  
United Veterans of Oregon

**Additional contributors:**

Marion County Historical Society  
Willamette University, Office of Alumni Relations  
Susan Tanabe, Japanese instructor, South Salem  
High School  
Barby Dressler, Tokyo International University  
of America  
Salem-Kawagoe Sister Cities, Inc.  
Anjaneen Livengood  
Laurel Grove  
Glenn Okawa and Kathy Andreas  
Georgette Yoshikai  
Diane Matsumura  
Carol Suzuki  
Mark Murakami.  
Bruce and Mary Priem  
Aurora Architectural Salvage  
Mail Depot

*Exhibit and pamphlet design, research and writing:*

Mako Hayashi-Mayfield  
Erin Zysett  
Mark Murakami